

March 13, 2012

Mary Louise Reardon

Good Morning Senators Colman and Fox, and Representatives Kissel and Hetherington and Honorable members of the committee.

I support these two raised bills: SB247 and HB5432.

I respectfully request, based on my testimony today, an addition to SB247 or to HB5432 be included for any Superintendent of CT public schools, and any Board of Education for CT public schools to have the legal power to remove a student, while under investigation for sexual assault, prior to an arrest from public schools. I also request, prior to an arrest for suspected sexual assault that is under investigation, a student perpetrator to be home schooled or to be out placed in another district facility.

My son, diagnosed with Aspergers and PDD nos was sexually assaulted at the age of 11. I could do no more than 'support him' while his perpetrator was allowed move freely within the community.

The sexual assault took place in October 2006, in March of 2007, after 6 months of investigation; the perpetrator was arrested at home. After his arrest, using the district's public bus transportation, the perpetrator was driven to school the next day. For six months, prior to an arrest, my son was subjected to harassment, bullying, and emotional abuse on a daily bases, because the boy who sexually assaulted him attended the same school.

Despite my repeated warnings, trips to the school on behalf of my son, working in cooperation with the Superintendent Office, their hands were tied because of the current laws. I was told time and time again "we cannot do anything until an arrest". My son, continued to be a victim of the boy who sexually assaulted him. When my son was harassed inside a gym locker room by the perpetrator and his friends, I stated I would bring suit against the district if a one on one aid was not placed with the perpetrator from that day on. I was then told by the assistant principal in order to have an aid with this student "we would need to get his parent's permission." Why? To this day, I believe the perpetrator had more rights and more protection within the (East Lyme) School District than my son did as a victim of sexual assault.

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My son has the right for a free public education, within a safe environment, as do all students attending CT public schools.

Thank you for the ability to testify and I would be happy to take any questions.